

No. PD-0003-20
Court of Appeals No. 01-18-00930-CR
Trial Court Cause No. B15-684

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COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS
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IN THE COURT OF
CRIMINAL APPEALS
AUSTIN, TEXAS

KYLE DEAN KUYKENDALL

v.

THE STATE OF TEXAS

**FROM THE FIRST COURT OF APPEALS, HOUSTON,
TEXAS & 198TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT,
KERR COUNTY, TEXAS**

APPELLANT'S BRIEF ON THE MERITS

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IDENTITY OF PARTIES & COUNSEL

Appellant certifies that the following is a complete list of the parties, attorneys, and any other person who has any interest in the outcome of this appeal:

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Appellee: The State of Texas

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INDEX OF AUTHORITIES

CASES

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STATEMENT REGARDING ORAL ARGUMENT

Appellant has not requested oral argument.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On May 30, 2018, Appellant entered a guilty plea to two counts of bail jumping/failure to appear, both third degree felony offenses. RR 2, 11-12. The trial court ordered a presentence investigation and reset the case for sentencing. RR 2, 12. The trial court held the sentencing hearing on August 1, 2018. RR 3, 1. After hearing the evidence, the trial court sentenced Appellant to 10 years imprisonment on each count, to run concurrently. RR 3, 23.

Appellant timely filed his notice of appeal from this judgment. CR, 32. On December 17, 2019, the First Court of Appeals reversed the judgment of the trial court, holding that Appellant's convictions violate the Double Jeopardy Clause in an opinion authored by Justice Lloyd.

The State filed a petition for discretionary review which was granted. This brief is timely filed by being electronically filed with the Court of Criminal Appeals on June 11, 2020.

APPELLANT'S ISSUES PRESENTED FOR REVIEW

- I.** Appellant's convictions violate the double jeopardy clause because Appellant was convicted of failure to appear on two cases that were set for the same day in the same court that were the subject of the same two-count indictment.

****** For purposes of reference in the Appellant's Brief the following will be the style used in referring to the record:

1. Reference to any portion of the Court Reporter's Statement of Facts will be denoted as "(RR____, ____)," representing volume and page number, respectively.
2. The Transcript containing the District Clerk's recorded documents will be denoted as "(CR____, ____)."

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENTS

I. Appellant's convictions violate the double jeopardy clause because Appellant was convicted of failure to appear on two cases that were set for the same day in the same court that were the subject of the same two-count indictment.

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

Pursuant to Rule 9.4(i)(3) of the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure, I certify that this brief contains 2,643 words (counting all parts of the document and relying upon the word count feature in the software used to draft this brief). The body text is in 14-point font and the footnote text is in 12-point font.

/s/ M. Patrick Maguire
M. Patrick Maguire,
Attorney for Appellant

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On May 30, 2018, Appellant entered a guilty plea to two counts of bail jumping/failure to appear, both third degree felony offenses. RR 2, 11-12. The trial court ordered a presentence investigation and reset the case for sentencing. RR 2, 12. The trial court held the sentencing hearing on August 1, 2018. RR 3, 1. After hearing the evidence, the trial court sentenced Appellant to 10 years imprisonment on each count, to run concurrently. RR 3, 23.

The failure to appear charges are each the subject of a single two-count indictment that was pending in the same trial court. CR, 6. The hearing on the underlying cases was set for the same date and time. CR, 6.

ARGUMENTS & AUTHORITIES

I.

Appellant’s convictions violate the double jeopardy clause because Appellant was convicted of failure to appear on two cases that were set for the same day in the same court that were the subject of the same two-count indictment.

A. Standard of Review

The Double Jeopardy Clause of the Fifth Amendment, applicable to the states through the Fourteenth Amendment, protects an accused against: (1) a second prosecution for the same offense after acquittal; (2) a second prosecution for the same offense after conviction; and (3) multiple punishments for the same offense. *Ex parte Marascio*, 471 S.W.3d 832, 847 (Tex. Crim. App. 2015). The correct double jeopardy analysis in a case such as this is a “units inquiry.” *Id.* The “analysis of an allowable unit of prosecution involves a situation in which two offenses from the same statutory section are charged.” *Id.*

If a court determines that there is a double-jeopardy violation, the proper remedy is to vacate one of the convictions; no additional proceedings are required. *Id.* at 845.

B. Analysis

The threshold question that must be addressed is whether this claim may be raised on a direct appeal where the claim was not raised in the trial court.

Appellant entered guilty pleas to each count of the underlying indictment. CR, 21; CR, 24. Appellant did not file any pleadings asserting a violation of his double jeopardy rights. Nor did he raise the issue before the trial court at any pre-trial hearing. At first blush, it may appear that Appellant's double jeopardy claim is not cognizable on appeal. However, there is an exception to the rule of procedural default in the case of a double jeopardy claim. Because of the fundamental nature of double jeopardy protections, a double jeopardy claim may be raised for the first time on appeal or even for the first time on collateral attack when the undisputed facts show that the double jeopardy violation is clearly apparent on the face of the record and when enforcement of usual rules of procedural default serves no legitimate state interests. *Gonzalez v. State*, 8 S.W.3d 640, 643 (Tex. Crim. App. 2000). *Gonzalez* recognized that a double jeopardy claim may be cognizable for the first time on appeal because it is a "fundamental" right." *Id.*

Double Jeopardy Claim is Apparent from Face of Record

A double-jeopardy claim is apparent on the face of the trial record if resolution of the claim does not require further proceedings for the purpose of introducing additional evidence in support of the double-jeopardy claim. *Ex parte Marascio*, 471 S.W.3d 832, 845 (Tex. Crim. App. 2015) (J. Richardson concurring).

The presentence investigation report that was admitted into evidence at Appellant's sentencing states "Motions to Proceed for the Debit/Credit card cases were filed on May 21, 2015 and arrested on two warrants on August 15, 2015. The Motions to Proceed were amended on November 10, 2015 and again on February 1, 2016.... Defendant failed to appear for Court on November 30, 2015, after being released on bond for the above-mentioned Motions to Proceed." RR 4, 9 (emphasis added). The Bailiff's Certificate from the underlying case, which is made part of the presentence investigation report, also reflects that Appellant failed to appear in the underlying felony cases on November 30, 2015. RR 4, 70.

The indictment in this case also shows that the double jeopardy violation is clearly apparent from the face of the record. CR, 6. The indictment alleges that Appellant failed to appear in the trial court on

November 30, 2015 for the two underlying offenses. CR, 6; RR 4, 68-69. The double-jeopardy claim in this case is apparent from the face of the record.

No Legitimate State Interest Served by Enforcing Rules of Procedural Default

As to the second prong of the *Gonzalez* test, while the state may assert an interest in maintaining the finality of a conviction, there is no legitimate interest in maintaining a conviction if it is clear on the face of the record that the conviction was obtained in contravention of constitutional double jeopardy protections. *Ex parte Marascio*, 471 S.W.3d 832, 844 (Tex. Crim. App. 2015) (J. Richardson concurring). Instead, the focus should be on whether Appellant has met the first prong of the *Gonzalez* test—*is a double jeopardy violation apparent on the face of the record*. *Id.* at 845.

In this case, there would be no legitimate state interest served by enforcing the procedural rules of default. Appellant was sentenced to the same sentence of 10 years in each offense to run concurrently. CR, 21; CR, 24. The First Court of Appeals correctly determined that Appellant's claims are cognizable on appeal.

Double Jeopardy Violation

The Court of Criminal Appeals addressed this issue in *Ex parte Marascio*, 471 S.W.3d 832 (Tex. Crim. App. 2015). *Marascio* is a conglomeration of concurring and dissenting opinions which culminate in a plurality opinion that gives no binding precedent. Thus, the question remains unresolved.

In *Marascio*, the defendant was convicted of three charges of felony bail jumping/failure to appear, and he was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment on each charge, to run concurrently. *Id.* at 832. *Marascio* was a post-conviction habeas corpus proceeding wherein the defendant raised a double-jeopardy claim for the first time. *Id.* at 840.

Marascio was charged under three separate indictments for the felony offenses of False Statement to Obtain Property or Credit, Money Laundering, and Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity. *Id.* at 840-41. All three cases were set for pretrial hearing. *Id.* at 841. The terms of *Marascio*'s release under each of the three bond orders required that he be present at all court settings. *Id.* *Marascio* failed to appear for one of his court settings on March 25, 2009. *Id.* *Marascio* was subsequently found guilty of three separate charges of Bail Jumping and Failure to Appear based upon his failure to appear for the March 25, 2009 pretrial hearing. *Id.* at 841.

One of the questions that was supposed to be determined in the *Marascio* habeas proceedings was “[w]hether convictions for multiple charges of failure to appear arising from a single failure to appear constitute a double jeopardy violation.” *Id.* at 841, n.8. This question, however, remains undecided.

Appellant urges this Court to adopt Judge Johnson’s reasoning in her *Marascio* dissent. Judge Johnson takes a common sense approach to the analysis of a double-jeopardy violation. She recognizes the fact that when dealing with a double-jeopardy violation, the court is dealing with a fundamental constitutional right. *Id.* at 852-53. In determining whether a double-jeopardy violation has occurred, the gravamen of the offense is that the defendant failed to appear. *Id.* at 853-54. The sole gravamen of the offense remains the act of failing to appear, thus the “unit of prosecution” for double jeopardy purposes is the number of times the person failed to appear. *Id.* at 854 (J. Johnson dissenting).

Judge Johnson dismissed the assertion that the gravamen of the offense is the “violation of the terms of release” of each individual bail bond. *Id.* The terms of the defendant’s release are a contract between the defendant and the bail bondsman. *Id.* This contract has no bearing on the gravamen of the

offense or the role of the trial court. The only way in which the dignity of the trial court was harmed was that he failed to appear in court. *Id.*

Judge Johnson noted that “[w]e do not charge a thief with four thefts if he steals a wallet that contains cash and three credit cards; we charge him with a single theft. And if a burglar enters a home without consent once and commits theft, assault, and arson, he may be charged with only one burglary, not three. Likewise we should not condone three charges for a single act of failing to appear.” *Id.* at 855 (J. Johnson dissenting).

Judge Alcalá’s dissent in *Marascio* is also instructive in support of Appellant’s position. Judge Alcalá noted that “[i]n determining whether a particular course of conduct involves one or more distinct offenses under a single statute, we must ascertain the ‘allowable unit of prosecution’ under the statute.” *Id.* at 859. The bail jumping/failure to appear statute does not expressly define the allowable unit of prosecution for the offense. *Id.* The statutory language, however, focuses on a defendant’s failure to appear in accordance with the “terms of his release.” *Id.* Judge Alcalá noted that “[i]t is axiomatic that [a defendant] is a single person and could be released from his confinement only one time, regardless of the number of cases for which he was being held.” *Id.* at 859-60. Because the statutory language refers to the “terms of his release,” this suggests that the gravamen of the offense of

bail jumping/failure to appear treats his release as a single thing regardless of whether he is being released on bail on one or many cases. *Id.* at 860 (J. Alcala dissenting).

Judge Alcala pointed out that in situations involving a similar gravamen, the Court of Criminal Appeals has held that only one conviction is permitted. *Id.* (citing *Harris v. State*, 359 S.W.3d 625, 630-32 (Tex. Crim. App. 2011) (holding that multiple convictions for indecency with a child by exposure violated double jeopardy because the gravamen of the offense was the exposure and not the number of children present)). Similarly, the gravamen of the offense of bail jumping/failure to appear is the act of failing to appear in court as required by the terms of a defendant's release from confinement on the multiple cases, and not the number of cases for which the defendant failed to appear. *Id.*

Because the gravamen of the offense of bail jumping/failure to appear is the failure to appear in court, Appellant's multiple convictions for failure to appear arising from a single missed court appearance constitute a double jeopardy violation. Accordingly, the First Court of Appeals correctly vacated one of the convictions to remedy the double jeopardy violation.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, Appellant respectfully prays that this Honorable Court sustain the appellate contentions herein and affirm the judgment of the First Court of Appeals.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I have served a true and correct copy of Appellant's Brief to counsel for the State, John R. Messinger, via electronic transmission at *john.messinger@spa.texas.gov*, and whose address is P.O. Box 13046, Austin, Texas 78711 on this the 11th day of June, 2020.

/s/ M. Patrick Maguire

M. Patrick Maguire

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